Women in Leadership in Samoa (WILS)

Pictured: Participants of Aana Alofi 3 & 4 Training, July 2020. Photo credit: UNDP-WILS

PROGRESS REPORT (JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020)

Women in Leadership in Samoa (WILS) Project
“Promoting women’s leadership and gender equality in Samoa”

“WILS is a three year joint project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women with funding from the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Samoa”
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**ACRONYMS**

BTI – Break Through Initiative  
DDC – District Development Committee  
DDPs – District Development Plans  
DFAT – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
GLOW – Girls Leading Our World  
IPPWS – Increasing the Political Participation of Women in Samoa  
NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations  
NUS – National University of Samoa  
MFAT – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
MOF – Ministry of Finance  
MPs – Members of Parliament  
MWCSDF – Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development  
OCLA – Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
OEC – Office of the Electoral Commissioner  
SAMPOD – Samoa Alliance of Media Practitioners for Development  
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals  
SIOD – Samoa Institute of Directors  
SUNGO – Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organizations  
ToC – Theory of Change  
ToT – Training of Trainers  
TLDP – Transformational Leadership Development Programme  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender equality and the Empowerment of Women  
VDLI – Village Leadership Development Initiative
Background

Name of the programme, duration and funding:
The Women in Leadership in Samoa (WILS) Project is a three and a half (3.5) year initiative covering the period from April 2018 to October 2022. The project is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia as part of the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women.

Description of the overall programme rationale:
The overarching goal of the WILS project is to strengthen gender equality and women’s leadership in Samoa building on lessons learnt from the Increasing the Political Participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS) project and reinforcing progress already made on gender equality and women’s leadership at the national level.

The project is based on a Theory of Change (ToC), which states that the project will adopt a Samoanisation concept, an idea that contextualises international best practices, and where the involvement and partnerships of local people will facilitate an inclusive and participatory process to increase project ownership. The aim of these locally driven strategies is to contribute to the sustainability of initiatives beyond the project’s timeframe.

The project works very closely with the Government of Samoa and relevant ministries including the Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), Office of the Electoral Commissioner (OEC), Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) and Ministry of Public Enterprises. It also engages with the National University of Samoa, Samoa Institute of Directors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) including the Women in Leadership Advocacy Group (WiNLA), Samoa Rugby Union, Samoa Netball Association, Samoa National Teachers Association, Society of Private Sector Nurses and Midwives (SPNM), Samoa National Council of Women (SNCW) and Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations (SUNGO), District Development Committees (DDC), civil society, private sector and individuals to deliver the activities outlined in its Work Plan.

Reporting period:
January – December 2020

Date of report submission to DFAT: 28 February 2021

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Brief information about project activities implemented during the reporting period:

Overall
Despite the challenging circumstances of 2020, the WILS project continued to deliver on its goal to strengthen gender equality and women’s leadership in Samoa.

During the reporting period, the main activities focused on the implementation of a contextualized leadership development programme for women, emerging leaders (both male and female youth leaders) and potential female candidates for the 2021 elections. Equally important was the mobilization of men (both titled and untitled) particularly men of title as the key decision makers in the local village governance system to create an enabling environment for gender equality and women in leadership. Hence, in 2020 the WILS project targeted men and boys in its leadership programmes. A total of 405 people (45% female, 54% males, 1% transgender) from one hundred and twenty-nine (129) villages from thirty-eight (38) districts in Upolu and Savaii participated in trainings utilising the Village Leadership Development Initiative (VLDI). The Break-Through Initiatives (BTIs) borne from these trainings as well as those from 2019 were supported by the project to ensure sustainability of learning and initiative for community development. The WILS project supported four (4) transformational leadership development trainings for nurses and midwives in the public and private sectors in commemoration of the International Day for the Nurse and Midwife 2020. Two (2) leadership trainings for aspiring women directors were carried out. The twenty-two (22) female candidates and potential candidates for 2026 elections were supported through the training and support programmes and television panel discussions and television advertisements.

The WILS project produced three (3) project activity briefs namely the WILS project brief, a brief on the VLDI (English and Samoan translations) as well as two (2) postcards of programme impacts for the Samoa Institute of Directors (SIOD) programmes. These were produced, vetted, published and disseminated for public information. The SIOD Programme briefs (English and Samoan translations) were also updated to reflect new information on implementation and programme coverage. The WILS Project contracted two organisations during the reporting period: The Samoa Alliance of Media Practitioners for Development (SAMPOD) was contracted to implement the project’s media survey and SUSTINEO Limited to carry out research on women in leadership research for the project. Both the media survey and the research are on track to be completed by end of 2021.

The Mid Term Review (MTR) for the WILS project was carried out in October to December 2020 by a local consultant. The MTR found a high degree of relevance and usefulness of the WILS project, and recommended the project be extended. The MTR has resulted in some key recommendations for the way forward for the project.

The total budgeted allocation for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2020 was USD755,782. Of this USD393,201 was allocated for UNDP activities while USD362,581 was allocated to UN Women. During the reporting period, the overall WILS delivery reached 89%. Delays in project deliverables were due to the Government of Samoa’s COVID-19 State of Emergency (SOE) restrictions on travel and public gatherings (March – December 2020), and before this impact of the measles outbreak (2019-2020). (Please refer to Annex A: on page 21 for the financial report).
The activities planned under Output 1 included the delivery of the VLDI and BTIs, capacity building programmes on directorship, and supporting coalitions and collaborative efforts amongst women.

The Transformational Leadership Development Programme (TLDP) informed the development of the VLDI, the first contextualized leadership development curriculum, translated in the Samoan language which aims to enhance leadership capacity and pathways of women and girls, community leaders, and emerging leaders including of people with disabilities. Due to the significance of engaging men of title (matais) as key decision-makers and young boys (without title) as future decision-makers and husbands, the project targeted men and boys to mobilize their support towards women empowerment and gender equality. The VLDI brings women and men together to discuss challenges facing their communities and ways to overcome them, contribute to building women’s confidence to exercise leadership and make a meaningful contribution to community development for the common good of their villages, districts and Samoa. A ‘safe space’ approach was adopted throughout the trainings where the participants were encouraged to share openly so they can build confidence and learn from each other. The training was structured in three (3) main parts namely personal transformation, social transformation and developing BTIs to address challenges faced by the villages, districts and country. The BTIs are to create sustainable change to address the root causes of the problems and change systems that keep the problems in place based on peoples’ universal values. A total of 188 BTIs resulted from this year’s trainings to sustain the learning and further support leadership initiatives to achieve gender equality in Samoa.

The VLDI guided the implementation of sixteen (16) trainings in partnership with the MWCSD through the District Development Framework. The training enabled new leaders to emerge and commit to enable the transformation of their organizations, institutions, societies and communities to provide durable solutions to the challenges of achieving gender equality. Participants learned about inner values (equality, justice, dignity, courage, kindness, peace, love, empathy, patience etc) in a profound manner and took actions according to those values, and learned about transformational tools to enable personal and social transformation. They identified patterns and systems that exist in society that perpetuate problems and discussed alternatives to address these problems including the underlying causes. Additionally, they learned the value of initiating sustainable change through their BTIs, in order to deliver the intended results as an individual and as a group, and to scale up and lead change.

In Samoa, the social norms that determine attitudes around women in leadership and gender equality are deeply rooted in social and cultural beliefs. These social norms negate efforts to progress women’s leadership and gender equality by both men and women. For instance, in the Women Matai and Leadership Survey, women defined their decision-making experiences as mainly to do with everyday domestic living such as child rearing while the decision-making for all other family matters is done by the men.\(^1\) Also, “women often prioritized their male relatives to become a matai (chief) because decision making is considered a man’s role. Others feel they neither have the capacity nor financial resources to serve the matai title.”\(^2\) The same survey also found that men do not support women as matais because it jeopardises the brother/sister covenant

\(^1\) MWCSD, Women Matai and Leadership Survey, 2015, pg 8

\(^2\) Ibid, pg 9
citing that it is inappropriate especially when sensitive issues like rape and incest are discussed during village council meetings. The learning from the VLDI trainings contributes to changing social norms and practices around women in leadership. More importantly, it creates platforms and opportunities for both men and women to work collectively to address women’s representation issues in Samoa at the village level through the Fa’amatai system (the Samoa chiefly system), public sector, private sector, in directorship and Parliament.

A total of twelve (12) trainings were conducted during the reporting period which improved leadership skills and knowledge of 405 people (54% males, 45% females and 1% transgender) from one hundred and twenty-nine (129) villages across thirty-eight (38) districts in Upolu and Savaii. The trainings provided the opportunity for a more inclusive participation of women with six (6) trainings solely targeting women and girls with a 100% female participation, (33% elderly (aged 55 years and over), 45% aged 36-55 years, 20% youth (aged 18-35 years), 2% age undisclosed). The leadership trainings targeting men and boys were attended by 220 males, 1 transgender and 11 women, all leaders in their villages. The inclusion of people with disabilities is key to ensure no one is left behind and this is reflected in 35% of total participants being people with disabilities (vision impairments, hearing impairments and various physical disabilities). The successive empowerment and leadership training has boosted the confidence of two (2) women (from Faasaleleaga 1 and Anoamaa 1) respectively to now contest in the upcoming elections for the first time.

The trainings led to positive changes in social and cultural norms, behaviours, perceptions and long-standing practices which in turn have effected changes in leadership at individual (for both women and men) and at the community level. Participants who attended the VLDI trainings as part of their BTIs have applied their newfound knowledge and skills by advocating for and instituting changes not only at the individual level but also within the local governance systems. For example, Foailalo village has finally acknowledged the human rights of women married into the village and passed a women’s committee policy to allow them to have a say in committee meetings, allow them to wear their hair in a high bun, allow them to wear earrings and allow them to wear sei3.

“It has always been the normal practice in our village that women who marry into our village are strictly prohibited from doing certain things. For example, they are not allowed to wear earrings, wear skirts or even put their hair up in a high bun. If they wish to wear a sei (flower behind the ear) they are to use the ‘tauvela’ (dried leaves used in the umu). They also do not have a say in our Committee meetings. If they are told off – sometimes for no good reason, they are not allowed to speak and are expected to just sit there and accept the telling off, whether they are right or wrong. During the training, I and my fellow women discussed this situation and decided that it was time for a change in order to make a positive change. We came back to our village and in our Committee meeting we raised the issue and moved a motion that these long standing practices be stopped. That our in laws be treated with respect, love and compassion. That they be treated equally. Although we initially received opposition because this has been a normal practice for years, we were able to apply the knowledge and skills we received from the training to continue the discussion until our leaders were able to understand why we needed to change. A decision was made that day to stop treating our in laws as we have been doing so for a very long time. Today everyone is happy. We respect each other and all women are treated equally. This is a big change for us but we see the good it has brought our Committee, our village and our families” Female Trainee4

“This training was very useful for me as a person. It has helped build my confidence to speak in public and has made me realize that I can also be a good leader in the work that I am already doing in my family and my village” Male Trainee5

3 Flower behind the ear
4 WILS Mid Term Review Report, 2021, pg 14
5 Ibid, pg 16
“The programme has been very useful for me. At first I was sceptical but by the end of the training I saw some weaknesses in myself that I needed to change in order to become a better leader. There were mindsets and behaviors that I realized were not positive and did not contribute to encouraging others. For example, when it comes to activities that require contribution of money and other items I have the tendency to want my members to contribute what they are being told to do and I expect very high standards of things being contributed because I do not want other groups to be better than us. When the women do not meet my expectations, I would give them a big telling off in front of everyone. I don’t think about the effects of my behavior on their self-esteem and morale. During the training I was reminded of the true values of a good leader (agatusili) and I deeply felt that I needed to change the way I treat these women. So after the training when we had an activity that required women’s contribution, I decided that I would not put pressure on the women and just encourage them to do their best. On the day, I spoke positive and encouraging words even though in my sight their contributions were not up to my usual expectations. I overcame my weaknesses and in return I saw the positive impact it had on the women as they felt appreciated and valued. I have been transformed because of the programme and now I am in a better position to help other women change for the better” Female Trainee

The VLDI trainings presented the opportunity for male participants to appreciate the value of women’s work and their inclusion in local governance. These trainings led them to take ownership of the challenges and appreciate women’s contribution to family and village development. The village council as the most important decision-making body at the village level has increased transparency and accountability to include women in decision making and ensure their voices are heard. The inclusion of men and boys in the VLDI trainings was very important in addressing the misconception that gender equality is about women trying to take over men’s leadership. The training enabled a positive change in attitude by men towards women’s leadership and gender equality. For example, the villagers of Siutu who attended the VLDI training passed a village law to add a fourth pillar to their village governance structure allowing women married into the village to sit in the village council meetings.

“During the training when we were asked with coming up with a BTI our team decided that we would propose to our village that the traditional triangle of the village governance (tafatolu o faiganu'u) be changed to a ‘square’ and that the social aggregate of faletua, tausi ma ava a taulelea (inlaws) are given a recognized placing in our village seating so that they are part of our decision making process. When we presented our proposal to our village council, there was good support as they all knew and understood the value these women bring into our village. This is a very big change for us especially when we know that others may question why we are changing the foundation of village governance but I thank God for helping our matai to make this big decision. Today, when we have our village meetings, we have a representative from this group of women sitting in and contributing to our discussions” Male Trainee

The programme presented the decision makers of Taga village the opportunity to engage in inter-generational thinking to provide more support to the younger village folk, particularly those attending tertiary education. The village has set up a Village Development Fund where financial contributions can be channelled towards students from poor and vulnerable households to enable them to complete their education. A village development committee is established and tasked with developing criteria for eligibility to the school fee fund to ensure no one is left behind.

“One of the changes that we have been able to make as a result of participating in this programme and as part of our BTI is that we (village council) have put in place a policy that there will be no more village delegations to family court cases. We gather at our meeting house in the morning to say a prayer and wish

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6 WILS Mid Term Review Report, 2021, pg 15
7 Ibid, pg 14
the family well but we no longer go down to the court house. This means that families are relieved from the cultural responsibility of giving the delegation a pasese (bus fare)” Male Trainee*

“The training that we attended inspired us to initiate the BTI of ‘fainuulelei’ (good village and governance) especially given the impacts of COVID19. Some of our villagers have lost their jobs. Our BTI looks at changing the traditional customs of funerals in our village. Part of our BTI is the banning of the traditional exchange of fine mats, money and food (si’i). The family of the deceased carry out the funeral arrangements without the usual traditional presence and attendance of the village (aula and tapuaga). This lessens the burden on families. The whole village including our leaders have really welcomed this major change and we are certain that we will continue with this new practice, even after the COVID 19 restrictions. We are thankful to the Project for inspiring us and giving us the tools to make this change.”

The VLDI was adopted by the Society of Private Sector Nurses and Midwives (SPNM) to develop its transformational leadership development training for nurses and midwives in the private and public sector to commemorate the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. The four (4) trainings were attended by 88 nurses and midwives (82% females, 3% transgender and 15% males). 49% of participants were categorized as youth (aged 18-35 years), 9% elderly (aged 55 years and over) and 42% are aged 36-55 years. The training has boosted the morale of these nurses and midwives, after being subjected to high public scrutiny and suffering a period of low morale. More importantly, considering the recent institutional changes to the Health Sector and the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, the training was critical support to strengthen women’s leadership and the equal access to learning and opportunities for nurses as frontliners and first responders in the health systems. These trainings enabled them to make meaningful contributions to decision making bodies to be more representative and enabled a positive environment supportive of women in leadership and gender equality. Post training assessments reveal that 100% of the participants have learnt more about themselves, their dreams, their values, their inner fears than they had before. Following the trainings, 100% of the participants reported that they understood that transformation encompasses both the personal and social spheres and had a better idea of their future directions and the determination to pursue it. Additionally, all the participants said they now felt equipped with knowledge on how to address challenges in their work environment.

The nurses and midwives BTIs focussed on individual leadership and personal growth to facilitate pathways to advance their professional careers. From the post-training follow up, it was found that 32% of participants had made excellent progress with their BTIs and had developed the capacity to advocate for their issues, influence changes and lead projects in the workplace, churches and communities. 42% made some progress in overcoming the institutional barriers (structural, relationships, private and public sector) that are hindering their progress. The nurses and midwives have also established a community of best practice to support, motivate and strengthen their networks in rural and urban areas.

Outcomes from the VLDI for communities include development of BTIs ranging from improved education outcomes, poverty reduction and food security, strengthened governance, leadership and gender equality, improved health and increased safety. A total of 100 BTIs were developed in 2020, forty-eight (48) of which were led by men and fifty-two (52) by women. To date 11% were successfully completed and 42% are ongoing, with resources either from external sources or self-funded. The remaining 47% of BTIs have not started due to lack of funding or internal village barriers. One of the reasons identified for the non-implementation of BTIs was the lack of skills in proposal writing. Hence, the project created skills development opportunities for women, men and youth through the implementation of six (6) proposal writing and project management trainings for rural and urban communities. As a result, 86% of Upolu participants and 87% of Savaii

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*Ibid, pg 35

**Ibid, pg 35

10 This was due to the sentencing of two senior nurses to at least five years in jail for manslaughter after they incorrectly mixed and administered a vaccine, causing the death of two infants in 2018.
participants demonstrated an increased understanding of evidence-based information to develop proposals to mobilize resources for their BTIs. Additionally, 100% of the participants from Savaii and 76% from Upolu showed an increased understanding of evidence-based and risk-informed reporting requirements for donors to ensure transparency and accountability.

Key outcomes from the VLDI trainings included village councils changing long standing by-laws for accountable and responsive institutions. These include the example of Siutu village which as mentioned above added a fourth pillar of Faletua & Tausi (women married to the men of title in the village) to their local governance structure. This showed the commitment and accountability by the village council to all villagers including women. After receiving training, the Gagaifolevao village council changed their by-laws to limit the number of attending church ministers at funerals to one, i.e. to the church minister to whose church the deceased had belonged to. This is because the presence of additional ministers from other churches would obligate the family members of the deceased to provide additional items of thanksgiving that were traditionally provided to the presiding minister of the funeral. Other village councils have developed by-laws to reduce financial burdens on families by reducing village/church obligations to be served during funerals, weddings, house and church dedications, income generating activities and others. As also noted earlier, Taga village council took the lead in initiating a village development committee and a scholarship fund to pay for school fees of children from vulnerable families whose parents cannot afford school fees. These demonstrate the decision-making body of the village being responsive to all its villagers to ensure quality education is received even by the most vulnerable.

Some of the reflections from the BTIs are highlighted below:

“Our BTI looked at reducing the financial burden on families within our community especially given the current situation that our country is in. Our proposal was tabled at our village council meeting and was accepted. We have now replaced the usual monetary and food fines administered on those who misbehave with hours or days of rendered service. The majority of the offenders are our youth yet the burden is placed on parents and other family members but during this time, everyone is finding it difficult to make ends meet. Now, when a youth is fined, he is now required to do things such as clear land and plant taro or bananas under the supervision of matai. We also made a rule that Church Ministers attend funerals or birthdays of their congregational members only. This relieves the burden from families having to present envelopes (containing money) to every single Minister in our village.” Male Trainee11

“The objective of our BTI is to lessen the financial burden on our village and families. We have 6 church ministers (faifeau) in our village and it was such a burden for families when it comes to funerals because they had to present the usual fine mats, food and money. At present, our village council has ordered that only the faifeau of the deceased is to attend the funeral instead of all six as per usual practice. There have since been three funerals and families are relieved and grateful for this new practice. We are now looking at how we can apply the same to other customs like matai bestowals (saofa’i), weddings and birthdays.”12

Women’s representation in private and public companies/statutory boards has remained marginal since the Samoa Institute of Directors (SIOD) was established in 2005. Members to government company/statutory boards were directly appointed by government and women were hardly represented in most boards. Out of a registered 141 members of the Institute representing both public and private sector, 31 are women or 21% of total board directors.13 The introduction of the Board Composition Bill in 2015 set up the composition of statutory boards comprising members of the private sector and established a recruitment process for the

11 WILS Mid Term Review Report, 2021, pg 15
12 WILS Mid Term Review Report, 2021, pg 35
13 SIOD, 2007 Annual Report
selection of board members by an Independent Selection Committee (ISC) comprising three private sector members.

In its efforts to increase the number of potential and eligible women applicants for public boards for the ISC to select from, the WILS project worked with the SIOD to implement two professional programmes which were attended by 54 aspiring directors (96% females, 4% males). The participants learned new knowledge and skills about the roles and responsibilities of a director, legal requirements and obligations of boards and directors, understanding financial operations and strategic planning, company analytics and board relations. The participants received the ‘Certificate of Competence in Directorship’ which is recognized by the Samoa Qualifications Authority.

The recruitment of board members was opened in 2019 to all those eligible to apply and be considered for selection. Out of 257 applicants who applied for board director posts in 2019, 70 were women applicants, or 27% of the total number who applied.¹⁴ The number of women applicants has increased slightly from 53 in 2015/2016 to 70 in 2019. From the 70 that applied, 42 were successful in becoming directors. 28/42 (66%) of current women directors were supported by the WILS project. The WILS project investment expanded the reach for more women to be trained in directorship which resulted in an increase of 5% of women in public sector boards from 24% in 2018-2019 to 29% in 2020. Overall, as per the WILS Performance Management Framework, the target (20%) for 2020 for the percentage of women who completed formal leadership trainings in directorship accredited by the Samoa Qualifications Authority has reached 62% (an increase of 42% from 2020 target).

| Output 2. Promoting political inclusivity and supporting women’s political participation through a focus on development. |
| A.R.2.1: Role of Parliamentarians in operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Samoa promoted. |
| Output 2.1 Activities: Work with the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) and SLIP in conducting the Briefing Programmes for the MPs, support the MPs knowledge exchange programmes. |

The activities planned under Output 2 included a series of seminars for MPs, supporting knowledge exchange programmes for MPs, and designing and implementation of a support programme for potential candidates.

The Briefing Programme (BP) was designed with the overarching aim of promoting the role of Samoa’s Members of Parliament (MPs) in operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Samoa.

The planned seminars for 2020 did not occur due to unavailability of the MPs, and the measles outbreak in quarter four (4) of 2019 which had lasting impacts on the first two (2) quarters of 2020. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Government of Samoa putting in place a State of Emergency (SOE) which banned public gatherings and to some extent limited the amount of people per gathering, making it challenging to organise the BP. Also, COVID-19 changed priorities for the Government of Samoa hence the Steering Committee decided to postpone the seminars until after the 2021 elections to benefit the incoming new group of MPs.

¹⁴ Data Supplied, Ministry of Public Enterprise, 2020
It is of note that no engagements between local MPs and regional and international MPs supported by the project occurred during the reporting period due to COVID-19.

- **Output 2. Promoting political inclusivity and supporting women’s political participation through a focus on development.**
- **A.R.2.2: Enhanced capacity of potential candidates for 2021 elections.**
- **Output 2.2 Activities:** Work with the Women in Leadership Advocacy Group (WINLA) to identify potential candidates, design and implement support program for candidates, support south-south exchange.

The Training and Support Programme for Potential Female Candidates was designed with the overarching aim of supporting potential women candidates for the 2021 elections. The first course on the Language of Communications was delivered in December 2019 and was attended by twenty-five (25) women but only five (5) of the participants confirmed their interest in running in the general elections as candidates then.

Therefore, the Language of Communications course and the delivery of the Effective Campaign Strategy courses were repeated in 2020 targeting new women candidates who did not take the first course in 2019. The WILS project provided a critical platform for public discussion around women in leadership among high potential candidates for 2021 elections. As a result, 22 women registered their candidacy with the Office of the Electoral Commissioner (OEC), of which 73% were supported by the WILS project through Language of Communication and Campaign Strategy courses. As per the post training surveys, the courses improved confidence and capacity of actual 2021 women candidates and potential women candidates for the 2026 elections, in using the formal Samoan oratory language for public/campaign speeches as well as improved knowledge in developing an effective campaign strategy to their advantage. The women reported to now have more confidence to be involved in politics because they have the theory and practical knowledge, skills and experiences to speak in public utilising the Samoan proverbs/oratory language in the correct manner and to advocate on gender issues. For example, two of the current female MPs confidently used some proverbs learned from the course in Parliament discussions in the reporting period. The women candidates were empowered in formulating their own campaign strategies with minimal costs and were given a step by step guidance on key things such as identifying voters, targeting voters, developing campaign messages, effective communication, tools of engaging voters, financing the campaign and rolling out the campaign strategy.

The WILS project in partnership with the Samoa National Teachers Association (SNTA) completed the recording and airing of six (6) television roundtables on two television stations, featuring women’s leadership journeys. The roundtables featured current and former women Chief Executive Officers in government ministries and state-owned enterprises, general managers of well-known companies/businesses, leaders of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), leaders in academia, community leaders, and women candidates for Parliament.

In addition, three (3) television advertisements were produced and aired with key messages persuading women to register as candidates, encouraging voters to vote for women candidates and generally supporting women in leadership. All of the female candidates were supported through the television advertisements profiling every woman candidate to raise awareness among the general public of who the women candidates are in their constituencies. As part of the project’s 2021 work plan, a similar newspaper advertisement will be published with the profiles of all women candidates, their names, age, village, constituency and campaign messages. This will further raise awareness in the constituencies in which the women are running, of the women candidates and the issues for which they are advocating.
The activities planned under Output 3 included developing the project’s Communications and Advocacy Strategy, implementation of advocacy and awareness raising activities, developing a training programme for younger women and supporting new matai title holders to participate in village councils.

A series of activities planned for this output such as the Literacy Week by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) and National Voters Day were not implemented due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency restrictions. The multi-media programmes which were planned in partnership with MWCS were delayed because the Ministry prioritised COVID-19 prevention work as the Government of Samoa stepped up its efforts to ensure COVID-19 does not reach Samoa’s shores. In 2021, the project is finalizing its partnership agreement with the MWCS for the implementation of these activities.

The SAMPOD was contracted in the fourth quarter of 2020 to carry out the media survey. The focus of the survey is to accurately gauge what the average Samoan media diet is in relation to women leaders (i.e. the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by the group). This will be done by surveying a diverse group of media practitioners on: firstly, providing an overall profile on the representation of women as leaders on the everyday media (across gender, age, disability, class demographics) in English and Samoan and secondly, the reporting capacity of media practitioners on issues pertaining to Women in Leadership. In Samoa, the coverage for stories of women in leadership by the media is reported only if it is event related. Women in leadership is considered as part of everyday life, whether it be at home, church, community, in the office or in Parliament debating on issues concerning the rights of women and girls. The stories on women in leadership are rarely being reported or heard of. It is intended that the final survey report by the SAMPOD will highlight training needs for the local media to improve reporting of women in leadership.

The WILS Project strengthened the leadership capacity of young women and new matai title holders by supporting the community VLDI Training of Trainers (ToTs). These trainings target youth (male and female) from new villages which were not covered by the VLDI trainings in Output 1. The VLDI trainings are delivered in Output 1 for men and women and in Output 3 for young people. During the reporting period, six (6) VLDI trainings were conducted targeting youth (Output 3) and twelve (12) targeting women and men (Output 1). The participation of young women in the training was crucial as the objective was to create
leadership pathways for young women to be leaders in the future. Additionally, the inclusion of young men from an early age is equally important in sensitising men to gender equality issues and the prevention of gender-based violence. The aim is to create in the male population a life-long awareness and appreciation of the value of women and enable them as facilitators of opportunities for women into leadership positions.

Also, the project is providing the opportunity for young women aspiring to become leaders in the public and private sectors to be trained in 2021 on the VLDI/transformational leadership in collaboration with the WINLA.

The VLDI Training targeted young women and men as current leaders in their youth groups and future decision-makers in the village councils was conducted in thirteen (13) districts consisting of thirty-five (35) villages in Upolu and Savaii. A total of 124 people attended the trainings, 57% are females, 43% are males, 4% of total participants were people with disabilities. 77% of participants are aged 18-35 years, 19% are aged 36-55 years and 4% are elderly people aged 55 years and over.

The trainings empowered young men and women to be change agents in the future in their communities. In the pre-test results, 30% of the participants ranked their understanding of leadership between “high” and “very high;” with 70% ranking theirs between “low” to “medium.” These two scenarios were completely reversed after the training when 98% of participants ranked their understanding between “high” and “very high;” 2% ranked theirs at “medium,” and none at “low”. The learning from the training motivated the youth to lead changes that will reduce poverty and hunger; work for the good health and well-being including access to clean water and sanitation for their families and communities; build confidence in themselves to address social issues of importance such as gender inequality; as well as generating income opportunities to ensure that unemployed youth can pursue further studies that will make them employable. The training encouraged them to work together for the common good, as well as building each other and their society to enjoy peace and harmony, as well as good quality of life.

“The participants have been their own worst enemies and their fears had drowned many of their dreams in life. The training has given them the boost they needed to rise above those fears especially when they were given lots of chances every day to speak in front of the group. They now learn not to underestimate themselves. The training provided the opportunity for inclusion of a troubled youth to engage with other young people and rethink his life’s purpose. He changed his behaviour and how he saw himself and more importantly the people around him created an enabling environment for this young person to thrive and realise his full potential. On the first day of training when it was revealed that he had been through a troublesome life, the training team (consultants and UN Women staff) kept a close eye on him and ensured that he felt included and encouraged. He was reminded that part of the problem was his own fears. His aunty who attended the training has testified to the change in his life since the first day of the training and they stayed up at night with a lot of their relatives and shared about the training and how useful it could be for people like her nephew, and all the youth in general” (Female Trainer).

“While living with my relatives in town, I was imprisoned for dealing with drugs, and when I came out, I was sent back to my village and have been labelled by my village as a bad boy, and it is like an expectation. As a result, I am always a heavy drinker and still have a smoke of marijuana from time to time. Even my own siblings do not trust me on anything. My aunty here who forced me to come to this training can testify to the kind of life I had. This training has given me a different feeling and has made me rethink the purpose of my life. I now look back with sadness to the many years of my life wasted because I received no direction or encouragement from anyone. I think God has given me a second chance by bringing me to this training and I feel free. I want to express my sincere appreciation
to the UN Women/UNDP for bringing this training to us. I now feel that I still have time to make my life useful.” (a participant from Vaisigano said this on the final day of training)

This is reflected in the quote below.

“This is a unique and excellent type of training different from all other types of training I have attended. Not only the approach is different, but the content really touched all of us in such a powerful way that has made us rethink our lives and motivates us to make a difference.” (Participant from Vaisigano)

The VLDI Training requires participants to develop BTIs to address challenges experienced by the families, villages, church and districts. Participants have developed BTIs to address challenges in their communities such as suicide, unemployment, alcohol abuse, increased levels of NCDs, youth violence, climate change and also to support WASH projects in villages, leadership, education and training. Three districts chose to do a collective BTI to address these issues and mobilize youth. Gasolofua of Siumu said this on the second day of training, and his suggestion gave birth to the BTI for Siumu District, the Youth Union of Siumu which was officially launched on the 11 September 2020:

“I feel sorry for the many young people of our village and district that always drink alcohol and end up fighting with each other. They do not belong to any church or youth group, they do not care about their parents and all they want is alcohol. As a youth leader in my church, I want the other youth leaders from other churches who are attending this training that we should make it one of the purposes of our lives, to help these troublesome youth. We have been blessed with this training so we should save those who did not have the opportunity to attend.”

The Annual GLOW Conference, a leadership initiative targeting girls in secondary school was cancelled due to COVID-19 State of Emergency restrictions by the Government of Samoa. Therefore, the WILS project was not able to support the initiative.

- **Output 3. Increased public awareness of and engagement in inclusive and effective political participation**
- **A.R.3.3:** Strengthened civic awareness.
- **Output 3.2 Activities:** Work with the Office of the Electoral Commissioner (OEC) to implement civic education programmes and conduct community survey.

The Office of the Electoral Commissioner planned to implement the National Voters Day and continue with their civic education and awareness programmes in the reporting year but these activities were cancelled due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency restrictions. Additionally, their priorities for 2020 changed due to preparations for the 2021 general elections in April.

The WILS project is finalizing a partnership agreement with the OEC to implement planned civic awareness programmes in 2021.
• **Output 4. Sharing knowledge of Samoa’s experience in promoting women’s leadership.**
• **A.R.4.1: Increased understanding of Samoa’s experience in promoting women’s leadership and lessons in the region.**
• **Output 4.1 Activities: Work with the SUSTINEO Company to design and implement the research on women’s leadership at all levels, longitudinal study and a documentary analysis from the research and longitudinal study.**

The WILS project was slightly stalled after the National University of Samoa (NUS) withdrew its interest to carry out research on women’s leadership in Samoa. It was challenging to source proposals due to low response from companies, as such the Request for Proposals deadlines had to be extended and advertised multiple times in order to source a sufficient pool of qualified proposals. The project has since contracted SUSTINEO, an Australian based company with experienced and qualified Samoa-based researchers to lead the design and implementation of Research on Leadership Pathways of Women in Samoa.

The research addresses the complexity of barriers women face. Such an undertaking takes into consideration strategies that have worked, lessons learned from experience, and identifies pathways forward. The research will not only expand on leadership pathways for Samoan women but also identify entry points for supporting women in leadership in Samoa.

**Communications, Media and Advocacy**

During the reporting period, the WILS project continued to leverage existing relationships with media outlets and specific media contacts to ensure maximum exposure for the project’s activities and impacts at the national level. The team has also worked to ensure communications materials were distributed to internal and external partners, stakeholders and the public (where appropriate) to improve the awareness and understanding of the WILS project and its activities.

**Media outreach**

The WILS team, with support from UN Women’s and UNDP’s communications unit, has engaged with local and regional media by submitting timely, quality and country specific press releases, and invitations to key events. The team prepared draft speeches and talking points for high-level representatives for public engagements such as official opening and closing ceremonies for project activities. A total of nineteen (19) project media releases have been issued for publication to local newspapers, television, radio stations and social media, with an additional three (3) television advertisements promoting women in politics and six (6) panel television discussions featuring women leaders.

Media coverage during this reporting period mainly focused on the implemented activities such as the VLDI trainings, BTI implementation, the SIOD professional programmes and the Candidates Programmes.

**Annex B** provides a full listing of all media coverage regarding WILS project activities during this reporting period.

**Communications**

The WILS project has produced activity briefs based on the lessons learned through project implementation. The following knowledge products were produced, published and disseminated, highlighting the impact of the project on its beneficiaries:

• WILS Updated Project Brief in English
• Samoa Institute of Directors Updated Brief in English
Seven articles for newspapers, social media, television and radio were written, these are:

- “Men as Partners to Advance Gender Equality in Samoa” on the VLDI
- “Nurses and midwives undergo transformational leadership”
- “Book launch to pay tribute to nurses and midwives” on Transformational Leadership/VLDI
- “Women Board Directors in Samoa Increase” for the SIOD programme
- SIOD Training for Women Directors for the SIOD programme
- “Born leaders supporting women matai in Samoa” for the BTI
- “UN official urges women candidates to be strong” for Candidates programme.

Social Media:
The WILS project uses the already existing social media sites of UNDP, UN Women Pacific, Australian High Commission – Samoa and the Government of Samoa.

During the reporting period, there have been 25 Facebook posts (WILS Events) on the UNDP in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau & Niue page as well as UN Women Multi Country Office in Fiji and Samoa. These posts highlighted WILS activities implemented by both the project and the project’s Implementing partners. The WILS project posts are also being shared by partners of WILS as well as participants who participated in trainings adding to the number of those already being reached through the UNDP and UN Women Facebook page. To date, these posts, on the UNDP in Samoa, Cook Islands, Tokelau & Niue and UN Women Facebook page received 195 Shares, 1,926 Likes, with 50,215 people reached and engagements totalling 9,866.

Project Governance

During the reporting period, three Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings were held on 10 February, 19 June, 27 October 2020. The PSC members include Samoa’s MFAT, MOF, MWCSD, SUNGO, Government of Australia, UNDP, UN Women and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The PSC provides the overall oversight and guidance to the project and meets quarterly.

During these meetings, the following decisions were discussed and made:

- Approval of 2020 Annual Work Plan and Budget
- Approval of the WILS Performance Management Framework
- Approval of the proposal by the Society of Private Sector Nurses and Midwives for transformational leadership trainings
- Approval of Terms of Reference for media survey, research, mid-term review
- An additional day for the VLDI trainings for proposal writing and project management and to ensure an inclusive participation of different groups such as people with disabilities, youth, men, women, elderly, transgender. This would make the VLDI training five (5) days.
- Future VLDI trainings to be village-based instead of district level.
- WILS to hire VLDI trainers of 2020 to follow up BTIs from their trainings. WILS PMU to follow up BTIs from 2019 trainings.
- An early engagement between the WILS PSC and Sustineo Pty Limited to conduct a briefing on the Research methodology and initial findings.
- The WILS PMU to include in the upcoming training the potential candidates and to extend the support to women candidates who have not been supported by the project.

**Evidence-based information around progress towards program objectives:**

**a) Evidence of strengthening support for WILS from local authorities**

- In 2020 the project partnered with a cultural expert to deliver VLDI trainings targeting men and boys in the communities. These programmes were highly supported by the village councils which is the decision-making body in villages.
- The MWCSD maintained its support to work with the PMU in identifying capable community leaders who can participate in the SIOD programmes for directors as well as VLDI trainings for both men/boys and women/girls.
- The community representatives from the WILS supported programmes have been very active in mobilizing resources for community development projects. This has been confirmed from the BTI follow up reports received.
- The MTR Report gave a Satisfactory rating for the WILS project in terms of its progress towards the project objective and outcomes. The MTR contains quotes from project beneficiaries documenting the relevance, efficiency and support for the usefulness of the project.

**b) Evidence of strengthening support for WILS and recognition of WILS from external stakeholders**

The WILS has received support and recognition by our donor partner, Australian Government. Other important stakeholders include the increasing recognition of WILS by other government stakeholders. Some examples below not already mentioned include:

- Invitations to the Australian High Commissioner to Samoa and the Deputy High Commissioner, and UNDP Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative to the Candidates Programme.
- H.E. Sara Moriarty, the Australian High Commissioner to Samoa and Barry Patterson, Deputy High Commissioner delivered closing remarks at the Language of Communication and Campaign Strategy courses.
- The UNDP Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative delivered closing remarks at the Language of Communication and Campaign Strategy courses.
- The Australian High Commissioner to Samoa hosted a gathering for all the women candidates for 2021 elections. This was coordinated with the WILS project.
- The Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Samoa delivered opening remarks at the SIOD programme.
- The UNDP Resident Representative delivered closing remarks at the SIOD programme.
- The transformational leadership training for nurses and midwives led by the Society of Private Nurses and Midwives (SPNM) and supported by the WILS project extended an invitation to members of the diplomatic core including the Government of Australia, Government of New Zealand, high-level representatives of the Government of Samoa and others for their training opening and closing.
- The UNDP Resident Representative was invited by the SPNM to open and close their trainings in Upolu and Savaii.
- Improved engagement with partners such as the OEC, WINLA, MESC, MWCSD, church leaders, village councils.

c) Evidence of raised awareness and recognition of the value of the WILS project

Overall: As highlighted in the communications section, there is growing recognition of the value of the WILS project in supporting women's leadership at all levels.

- Improved support from the members of the Steering Committee, key government ministries crucial to the successful implementation of the project activities such as the MWCSD, MOF, MFAT, OCLA, OEC, NUS and active NGOs such as Samoa Teachers Association, SUNGO, WINLA, Adventist Disaster Relief Association (ADRA), Samoa Netball Association and Samoa Rugby Union. Also, the increased collaboration with the District Development Committees under the MWCSD and the network of Village Representatives and Village Women Representatives.
- The PMU has received requests from members of the public on how they can work with the WILS project and requesting participation in WILS activities.
- Women MPs who attended the Language of Communication courses are more confident and are now advocating for gender equality and supporting women's leadership in parliament.
- The active engagement and support from the men (men of title and without title) for the VLDI trainings provides a stepping-stone for the active engagement of decision-makers towards women empowerment in Samoa.
- The implementing partners, the Australian High Commission to Samoa and the PMU have established close working relationships and continue to hold regular updates on the project.
- The MTR report documents a high degree of relevance and usefulness of the WILS project for its beneficiaries and has recommended for an extension of the project to the next general elections.

Lessons learned: Based upon the original assumptions, together with evidence to date from program achievements and information, and information about each of the contexts where the program is implemented, answer the following questions:

a) What is your organization learning about supporting change towards gender equality in the Pacific?

- While the project aims towards strengthening and building leadership pathways for women, this cannot be achieved by involving women only. The social norm is that leadership is seen as a man’s role which is why some women are not confident to exercise leadership especially in the village council. Hence, it is equally important to mobilize men and boys and engage them in advocacy for gender equality so that men are responsible for creating those opportunities and that women see that men are creating an enabling environment for women to be part of decision making and leadership in their communities.
- In order for an initiative to be successful and sustainable, it must be noted that while it is important to learn from international best practices, all materials and tools must be contextualized to be relevant and applicable to the Samoan context. These were continuously refined to fit each target audience. More importantly, experienced local trainers/experts must be used for relevance and appreciation of context.
b) What other lessons are being learned (positive or negative) from implementing activities that might serve to improve the effectiveness of any future similar activities?

It is important to do the capacity assessments of all implementing partners NGOs, government ministries partners during the design phase so that the assessment does not delay the implementation of activities and also will lead to early assessment of the suitability and capacity of partners.

**Follow-on activities: How will the next set of activities be different as a result of achievements and learning to date? Provide a summary of agreed changes following discussions with stakeholders.**

The VLDI trainers’ reports and the WILS Mid-Term Review Final Report recommendations resulted in a change of the implementation of the VLDI trainings. Some of these included changing the training from Training of Trainers to delivery of trainings in two phases. Phase 1 to be a VLDI training with the understanding that selected trainees from the VLDI Phase 1 training will be trained again in the Training of Trainers to be used as future resource personnel. Also, the district model for delivery will be changed to village-based to ensure sustainability and easier coordination.

The MWCSD will use the VLDI trainers used by the WILS project to capitalise on their expertise for similar training.

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**Brief Information about program outputs and achievements from these activities:**

**NOTE:**

The WILS Project Performance Management Framework was approved by the WILS Steering Committee in 2020 and has been updated annually.

**Other information/comments: Please provide here any other information or comments you consider relevant in assessing the benefits of the activities or the likely benefits of similar activities in the future.**

NA.
### Financial Report (please refer to Annex A) January – December 2020


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDP Component Activities</th>
<th>2020 Available Resource</th>
<th>Approved budget 2020</th>
<th>Year End Expenditures</th>
<th>Budget Utilisation %</th>
<th>Resource Utilisation %</th>
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#### UNWOMEN Component Activities

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<tr>
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<td>C/F resource balance</td>
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#### WILS Overall Totals (UNDP & UN Women)

| Total C/F resource bal                                                     | USD663,478.00 | USD663,478.00 | USD663,194.00 | 100%   |

Total C/F resource bal: USD284.00
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<tr>
<th>Output/Activity Result</th>
<th>Budget USD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1</td>
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<td>A.R 1.1</td>
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<td><strong>Total Budget 2021 (all outputs)</strong></td>
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Annex B – Summary of Media on WILS during this reporting period

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<th>Media</th>
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<th>Title</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
<td>08/03/2020</td>
<td>Women from Safata wishes all the women on Samoa a Happy International Women’s Day 2020</td>
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<td>Breakthrough Initiative Initial meeting</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
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<td>TOT - Aleipata Itupa i Lalo for Men Leaders in the Community</td>
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<td>UN Women Facebook Page</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
<td>01/08/2020</td>
<td>SIOD Training for Women Directors</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
<td>02/08/2020</td>
<td>Nurses Training for Savaii Nurses and Midwives</td>
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<td>TOT - Alataua i Sisifo and Falealupo District for Men leaders in the community</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/undpsamo/posts/4093611850709242">https://www.facebook.com/undpsamo/posts/4093611850709242</a></td>
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<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
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<td>Nurses leadership training covers Upolu, Savaii</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>UNDP Facebook Page</td>
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<td>TOT - Apia, Aiga i le Tai District for Men Leaders in the community</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>UN Women Facebook Page</td>
<td>15/09/2020</td>
<td>TOT - Youth of Vaisigano District</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/page/543397385768112/search/?q=WILS">https://www.facebook.com/page/543397385768112/search/?q=WILS</a></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>UN Women Facebook Page</td>
<td>17/09/2020</td>
<td>TOT - Safata District Youth</td>
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<td>UN Women Facebook Page</td>
<td>18/09/2020</td>
<td>TOT - Youth of Siumu District BTI implementation</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Sama Observer</td>
<td>24/11/2020</td>
<td>UN Officials urges women candidates to be strong</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/samoaoobserver/posts/4048795878482528">https://www.facebook.com/samoaoobserver/posts/4048795878482528</a></td>
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